

Period of all

this is a common place

5

A N
Effectual Remedy
Against the
F E A R
O F
D E A T H.

H E B. 2. 15.

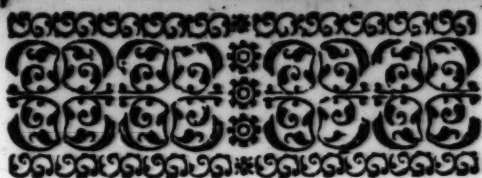
— *And deliver them who
through Fear of Death
were all their Life-time
subject to Bondage.*

By JOHN NORRIS, M. A.
Late Rector of Bemerton
near Sarum.

L O N D O N:—

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A N
Effectual Remedy
AGAINST THE
Fear of DEATH.

H E B. 2. 15.

— *And deliver them who
through fear of Death were
all their Life-time subject to
Bondage.*



N D sure there are
none that have
more need of a
Deliverer, or that
are with more Dif-
ficulty deliver'd, than the Per-
sons of this Character and
Condition. For as of all the

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Evils incident to Human Life there is none greater than the Fear of Death (for even Death it self may not be compared with it) so also there is none more Natural and Necessary, and Consequently more difficult to be either prevented or removed. The Fear of Death is just as Natural as the Love of Life, and nothing less than Death it self can wholly silence either of these Passions. That indeed is so intire and so thorough a Divorce, that it not only disunites the Soul from the Body, but from the Love of it too; and by that at once cuts off all the Ties that fasten us to the Corporeal and Sensible World, which we cannot be perfectly loosen'd from as long as we are united to our own Bodies: But there is no-
thing

the Fear of Death. 5

thing else that I know of that has Power enough to make us wholly out of love with Life, and consequently utterly to rid us of the Fear of Death. Not to Fear Death therefore at all, a Man had need actually Die, or be Dead, for so long as he Lives, so long as he is united to his Body, and by that to a sensible World, which by the General Order of Nature gratifies and entertains all those Powers of Sensation which are at present awaken'd in him, and so gives some Rest and Repose to his Natural Desire of Happiness, so long he must needs fear Death, if 'twere upon no other account than as 'tis a dissolution of Life, and of that Natural Sweetness and Pleasure that attends it. So that the

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Fear of Death seems to be like some of those inveterate Cleaving Diseases that are so lodg'd and radicated in the Blood and Spirits, so incorporated as it were into the very Habit and Constitution of the Body, that they cannot be put off but when that is, and are Curable only by *Death*, the *Universal Remedy*.

IT lies indeed very hard upon Man, and 'tis what renders his Condition in this World very pitiable, that an evil which is so great in it self (as the Fear of Death is) should withal be so difficult to be removed. That that which beclouds the Light of his Mind, and is of it self enough to disrelish the whole Comfort of his Life, should be so close an Attendant

the Fear of Death. 7

Attendant to both, and that what makes a Man so burthen-som and uneasy to himself, should be as inseparable from him as himself. But thus it is, and the same may be said in proportion concerning the other Instances of his Misery as well as this. The lesser Evils of Human Life have many and cheap Remedies, and are cur'd as easily as they might be born, while in the mean time those which are less Supportable are (to complete the Misery of Life, and if possible, to wean us from it) at the same time less Curable. But as there is no Temporal Evil less supportable, when in Extremity, than the Fear of Death, so there is none less Curable than that.

THE Greatness of this Evil, and the Difficulty of its Cure have made Life a very great Misery to some Men, and truly a very Mixt, Insincere, Questionable Blessing to all, and both together have drawn down Pity and Compassion from Heaven, and made it an Undertaking worthy of the Son of God to relieve poor Mortals in some Measure from an Evil which they are so little able to bear, and less able to remove, that so the Burthen if not absolutely taken off, might yet be somewhat lightened, and better proportion'd to the Shoulders that were to stand under it, and that as far as was possible *this bitter Cup might pass from us.* By the way we may guess at the Malignity of the Disease from the Nobleness

the Fear of Death. 9

Nobleness of the Remedy.
Too Noble indeed for a Creature, if one of less value would have served the turn. But such was the Stubbornness of the Fatal Evil that it would yield to no less Sovereign application, and such the Goodness and Mercy of God that he thought it not too Good, but would rather his own Son should once taste of Death, than that Man should always live under a constant dread and fearful expectation of it. For it seems it was one part of the wonderful undertaking of Christ to deliver Men from the Fear of Death as well as from the Evil Consequences of it, as we may here learn from the Apostle, who speaking of this undertaking of Christ, tells us, *That forasmuch as the*
A 5 *Children*

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Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. And that to a double End or Purpose. 1. That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil. Which denotes more immediately our Deliverance from the evil Consequences of Death. And 2. (as in the Words of the Text) That he might deliver them who thro' Fear of Death were all their lifetime Subject to Bondage. Wherein is express'd our deliverance from the Fear of Death, which is here made a part of our Saviour's undertaking for Mankind, and particularly mention'd as one of the powerful Motives that drew him down from Heaven to take upon him our Nature, and to suffer in it.

W^a

the Fear of Death. II

WE have here the Fear of Death, the Bondage to which this Fear Subjects Men, and the Deliverance from this Fear and from this Bondage. —

And deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their life-time Subject to Bondage. So that the Words do upon the first View point out to us these Three Subjects of Discourse.

FIRST, *The Fear of Death.*

SECONDLY, *The sad effect of this Fear where it is predominant.*

THIRDLY, *The Remedy of Both.*

FIRST, *Of the Fear of Death.*

This in General is either *Natural* or *Rational*. By the *Natural* Fear of Death, I mean that which prevents all Reason

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son and Discourse about it, as not depending upon any thing without, but resulting wholly from the inward Frame and Constitution of our Natural Being. By the Rational Fear of Death I here understand that to which we are not pre-determin'd by any Natural Prevention or Instinct, but which is purely grounded upon Reason ; by that Meaning, not precisely right or solid Reason, but all or any such Motives or Arguments as our Reason shall offer and present to us indifferently, whether they are Solid or Not.

W H I C H Fear of Death ; however it may be often found ; to be *Irrational* upon a true ; account and estimation of ; things, there being not per-
haps

the Fear of Death. 13

haps sufficient Ground for it, may yet be very properly call'd a *Rational* Fear in the Sense that I now use the word Rational, as 'tis oppos'd to that Natural Fear of Death which has no Reason or Argument, but mere Nature for its Foundation. I shall discourse of these two Fears distinctly.

I. THERE is a Natural Fear of Death in Men, which is not an Original but a derivative Passion, resulting from the Natural Love of Life. We naturally fear Death because we naturally love Life.

So that this Passion is only a Consequence of the other, or rather but a different way of expressing it.

IF

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IF it be demanded why there is such a Passion as the Fear of Death, or rather as the Love of Life in our Natures, I answer for many wise Ends and important Reasons, these two especially.

1. THAT Man might persevere to *Live*.

2. THAT he might Live in *Society*.

1. THAT he might persevere to *Live*, that he might continue in his present State, and abide in the Station wherein God had plac'd him, and not upon the Account of any Trouble or Pain (whereof he is like to have no want as long as he lives here) Voluntarily quit

the Fear of Death. 15

quit his Post, till God should be pleased to discharge him. And not only so, but that he should be induced to take care of his Life, and avoid all such Things or Actions as might shorten or destroy it, and use all such Means as are necessary to preserve and prolong it, which he would either Forget or Neglect, or Studiously Omit to do were it not for that Pleasure and Sweetness, which is annex'd to Life. Which is almost all the Pleasure that some Men have, who by the Iniquity of their Circumstances may be so far stript of the Particular Enjoyments and Comforts of Life, as to have little more left them than the bare Natural Pleasure and Sweetness of Life in General, were it not for which there would be

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be Nothing in the World to
ingage their further Continu-
ance in it.

2. THAT he might live in
Society. As Man is not a
Creature fit to live out of So-
ciety, so were it not for the
Fear of Death he would not be
fit to live in it. For though
reasonable Creatures ought to
be govern'd by Reason, yet
in the Posture that Human
Nature now stands, Reason
alone is too weak a Principle
to keep a World of Men in
Order, whose Corrupt and Ir-
regular Passions would upon
all Occasions transport them
into great Violences one against
another if they had nothing
else but mere Reason to re-
strain them. Passion there-
fore that is not to be govern'd
by

the Fear of Death. 17

by Reason, must be govern'd by it Self; that is, One Passion must be set to Confront and Counterpoise another. And since Rational Creatures will not be order'd in a Rational way, and keep within the limits of their Duty upon the Consideration of Right and Equity, Force must be made use of as a Suppletory to the defects of Reason, and here comes in the Necessity of Civil Government. But now if Men did not Naturally dread and stand in Fear of Death, the Government would have no sufficient hold upon them, or Ascendant over them. But by the help of this Passion they are kept in Awe, and so in Order; which therefore serves as an Instrument of Government, and as an expedient to procure

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procure the end of a Sociable Life.

I pass now Secondly from the Natural to the Rational Fear of Death. This I shall Consider,

1. As it generally is.
2. As in strict and right Reason it ought to be.

1. As it generally is. It is generally very great. I may say extravagant. There is nothing so much, nor so universally fear'd as Death. Men fear that who fear nothing else, and not only the thing it self, but even the Name of it is terrible, and makes those that hear it tremble. *Death*, there is a terror in the very Sound, and our Blood and our Spirits do as it were retire from it

the Fear of Death. 19

it. Nay even that which carries any Relation to it, or any sensible representation of it, or any way brings it to our Mind, the very *Picture* of it is formidable. The hearing of a Passing-Bell, the Solemnity of a Funeral, the Dress of the Mourners, nay, even the sight of an empty Coffin that has only the *Colour* of Mortality, strikes us with Horror. And yet these are only some of the Out-guards that make up the Retinue of the King of Terrors. How dreadful then does he himself appear, and how do the greatest Kings and Emperors, nay, what is more, *Philosophers* and *Christians* tremble before him!

SOME Few indeed there are
(but they are generally
thought-

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thoughtless and unreflecting Persons) who have little more than the Natural Fear of Death. That indeed they cannot shake off, but as to any dread that arises from Consideration or Rational Apprehensions, they have little or nothing of it, but go out of the World almost as unconcernedly as they came in. But these I suppose are instances of a rare Contingency, and I know of nothing but either great *Stupidity*, or extraordinary *Sanctity* that can produce such a degree of indifferency and unconcernedness. But for the generality, Men have too much Apprehension, and too little Innocence, to be thus fearless and unmoved at the Approach of Death. They fear it upon rational Views and Prospects,

the Fear of Death. 21

Prospects, as well as by a Natural Horror, and in this respect the most thoughtful and active Minds are apt to fear it most, as being most capable to survey it in its several Views and Postures, and able to draw the most lively Images and Representations of it. The better the Imagination here, the brighter the Scenes, and the stronger the Fear. But they that are under the least rational Concern for Death. (because indeed they think little about it) fear it however to great degrees, and upon several accounts. For Death has various Faces according as the Light is wherein we view it, and every Aspect looks grim, and excites its proper Fear in the Hearts of Miserable Men. Some fear it as 'tis

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a quitting of the Body, which considering the close Union that is between Body and Soul, they imagin cannot be done without great Pain. Some again fear it as 'tis a leaving of the World, which is loved and enjoy'd with too much Passion to be lost without Trouble and Sorrow. Others again fear it as a thing that indangers their Being, and threatens them with Annihilation. Others as an entrance upon a new and altogether unexperienc'd State and way of Life, which must be now led in a new World, in a new Company, and after a new and strange Manner. And last of all Death is fear'd in respect of those dismal Consequences it draws after it upon the Guilty and ill-affected Soul, whom

the Fear of Death. 23

whom it delivers over to the
just Judgment of God and
Eternal Damnation. These
are the several Views and Pro-
spects of Death, and the seve-
ral Arguments upon which Men
ground their Fear of it. And so
much to represent the Rational
Fear of Death as generally it
is. But Men being every
whit as unreasonable in their
Fears as in their *Desires*, it
will be requisite that we pro-
ceed to consider this Rational
Fear of Death.

2. As in strict and right
Reason it ought to be. Imagi-
nation has here very much
Swoln and blown up the Idea
of Death, and brought in a
very large and frightful Bill
of Terrors, but for our Com-
fort

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fort Reason will strike off a great part of the Accompt.

FOR First, 'Tis most Certain that Death ought not in reason to be fear'd upon the account of that *Pain* which is vulgarly presumed to attend the separation of the Soul from the Body. This Fear is unphilosophical; as being founded upon a false Notion of the Union between Soul and Body, which is not (as our gross Imagination is apt to Suggest) by any Contact, Implication, or Cohesion of one of these Substances with the Other, as Bodies are united together, but is only a Mutual Reciprocation of Action and Passion between Soul and Body, which are then said to be United
when

the Fear of Death. 25

when Certain Motions of the Body depend upon Certain Thoughts of the Mind, and when Certain Thoughts of the Mind follow upon Certain Motions of the Body. This is the Union of Soul and Body according to its *Formal* Notion. The *Cause* of this Union is no other than the general Law or Will of God. The *Condition* of it is such a Certain Temper or Disposition of the Bodily Frame, as suppose, that the Heart be able to send up animal Spirits to the Brain, and that the Brain be able to send them back again by the Nerves into the Muscles for the Motion of the Members. As long as that Mechanical Disposition of the Parts lasts, so long by the Order of God this reciprocation of dependence

B

dance

dance as to Action and Passion does also last, and when that Disposition ceases, then by the same Order of God this Reciprocation Ceases. And this is what we call *Death*, viz. when such a Spirit has no longer any relation of dependency as to Action or Passion upon such a Body. But now what *Pain* can we conceive to be in this? 'Tis plain that all the Pain is previous, in those preparatory Motions which serve to demolish the *Mechanism* of the Body, which when it has receiv'd its last Indisposition, can no longer affect the Soul with Pain, all relation of dependency being then supposed to be at an End. So that that Pain which we grossly fancy to be in Death upon the Separation of Soul and Body, is really the Pain of
Sickness,

the Fear of Death. 27

Sickness, and ought to be reckon'd only upon that Score, and 'tis Certain that many a Man has undergone, and does daily undergo more of this Pain without Dying, than many of those do who Die. And if these Pains are not so mightily fear'd when consider'd as terminating in *Sickness*, why should the Difference of *Death* make them so dreadful, which can add nothing to the *Pain*, whatever it may do besides? So that Death is not to be fear'd upon this first and common Pretence.

NEITHER Secondly, Is it to be fear'd as 'tis a *Leaving* of the *World*. For besides the Vanity and Vexation of all things here (which will soon make a Wise Man more Sick

B 2

of

28 *A Remedy against*

of the World than of any other Disease) that which we call Leaving the World is only leaving one certain part of it, and that in all probability the meanest part of God's whole Creation. The Meanest in its Natural State and Order, besides that accessory Vanity brought upon the Creature by Sin. *Rom. 8. 20.* And since the Universe is of such an unimaginable extent, and that there is such variety of Mansions in the House of God, shall we be so fond of one Room, and that in all likelihood the worst, as to dread a removal into another Region ! For as I said by our leaving the World we can understand no more than our leaving this part of it, where we were born, and bred, and have for
some

some time had our dwelling. So that in this respect to Die is but like being sent Abroad to Travel into a Foreign Country, or, if you would have a Comparison from Nature and Philosophy, like the passing of a Comet out of one Vortex into another. 'Tis not to be exported beyond the Universe into an Empty space, nor to be our selves reduced into a State of *Emptiness*.

FOR Thirdly, As to the pretence of *Annihilation*, 'tis Certain, First, That there is no reasonable ground for any such Suspicion, since both Philosophy and Scripture are so directly against it. But Secondly, If there were, as some Fancy, and more perhaps wish, yet why should this be made

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an Argument of Fear? Is it such a dreadful thing to be in a state of Indifferency and Neutrality, to be neither Happy nor Miserable? Is there so much terror in *No-thing*? 'Tis a State (if I may call it so) which we have all been in before we were made, and 'tis what we experiment in great Measure every Night, when in a deep and sound Sleep we forget our selves and the whole World, and lose even the Consciousness and Perception of our very Being. And is there any thing so dreadful in this? Or does it make us afraid to repose our Heads upon our Pillows?

THEN Fourthly, As to the Objection of *Novelty* taken from a New Life, New World,
New

the Fear of Death. 31

New Company and the like, this one would think should rather invite, than terrify us. For would we always dwell here in these Houses of Clay, and be no otherwise than we are, and see no more of the Works of our Great Creator? We are curious and desirous of Novelty while we live, and are for making New Experiments in Nature, and New Discoveries upon this little Ball of Earth, and are not a little pleased when by the favourable aid of a *Telescope* we have spied out a New Star, or a New Feature in the Face of the Moon, and shall we be afraid of Death because it makes that Instrument Needleless, because it presents us with a New Scene, because we shall then Change *States, Worlds,*

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and *Companies*? Ay but to
 Converse with Spirits---- But
 wilt not thou then be a Spirit
 too? And will it not then be
 as Natural and Suitable to thee
 to Converse with Spirits, as it
 is now to Converse with Men?
 For what is it but Similitude
 and Proportion that recon-
 ciles either? We see that Per-
 sons of low Rank and Educa-
 tion are ashamed to be among
 Courtiers and People of high
 Degree, who yet Converse
 freely with one another. So
 that we may well discount all
 these several pretences for the
 Fear of Death out of our
 Reckoning, and then there
 will remain only One, *viz.* the
 sad Consequences of Death in
 reference to the Judgment of
 God, and Eternal Damnation.
 And indeed this is the only
 thing

thing for which Death ought reasonably to be fear'd, and this carries an infinite Terror with it. Not that Death is always to be fear'd for this (for then indeed our Condition were deplorable) but that whenever Death is Terrible, this is the thing that truly makes it so, and the only thing that can rationally do it. All the rest are but Bugbears to fright Children, this is the only *Rational* Terror in Death. And so the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 59. *The Sting of Death is Sin.* As this is that which gives Death all its Power over us: So this is that which makes it truly formidable to us. This is that which arms it with a *Sting*. And 'tis a sharp Sting indeed, whereby it wounds Men with Eternal Pains hereafter, and with most amazing apprehen-

B 5 fions

sions here. Which leads me
to Consider,

SECONDLY, *The Sad Effect*
of this Fear of Death where it is
predominant. Many are the
Sad Effects of this Passion,
but that mention'd in the
Text is, that it Subjects those
that are under it, during their
whole Lives (supposing that
they are under it so long)
to a State of *Bondage*, to a
Miserable Spirit, and Slavish
Temper of Mind. By which
the least that we can under-
stand is, that the Fear of Death
is enough to sour all the
Sweetness, and spoil all the
Comfort of Life, or that there
is no tolerable Enjoyment of
Life till a Man is got above
the Fear of Death. Not there-
fore to mention the Throws
and Agonies, the Distractions
and

and Confusions of Mind that the Fear of Death produces in impenitent and despairing Sinners in their *last* Hours, whereof History and Observation may furnish us with many Tragical Instances (though by the way, at the rate that Men live, I wonder there are not more) I shall consider only at present that constant Habitual effect (as I may call it) which it has throughout their whole Lives, that which the Text here takes Notice of, and expresses by their being all their Life-time subject to *Bondage*. The Sense of which I cannot better express than I have already in this Proposition; that there is no tolerable Enjoyment of Life till a Man is got above the Fear of Death.

WHEN

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WHEN once indeed a Man is arrived to this pitch, he may then be said truly to *Live*, and may call Life his own, as being able to relish and enjoy every part of it, but till then his Life may be more properly call'd a Penance, a Torture, a Death, any thing than an Enjoyment. For let a Man's Condition in this World be otherwise never so Fortunate, and the Circumstances of it never so delightful and advantageous; let him have his own *Wish* and others *Envy*, let him be never so full of Honours, Pleasures, and Riches, yea, and of *Days* too wherein to enjoy them, yet what Content or Satisfaction will he be able to take in all this, if the whole ends in a dark Prospect, and he has upon him all the
while

the Fear of Death. 37

while the Apprehensions of an angry God, and the Fears of Death, Judgment and Hell? With what Satisfaction can a Man, whose Mind is fill'd and over-set with these great Ideas, enjoy the most luscious Pleasure that this Life, or this World can afford? How can he that expects a Miserable *Eternity* relish any of the little Divertisements of *Time*? How can he that fears he shall enter upon the Portion of the Damn'd immediately after Death, find any Savour in the short Delights of a vain transitory Life? How can these little Pleasures relish with those mighty Fears, the Pleasures of Time with the Fears of Eternity, and how can he that apprehends everlasting Sorrows then, find in his Heart
to

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to laugh or rejoice now? *Solo-*

mon, indeed bids
Eccl. 11. 9.

his young Man rejoice in his Youth, and let his Heart cheer him in the Days of his Youth; but the difficulty is how he shall be able to do this, if at the same time he is to consider what follows, that for all these things God shall bring him into Judgment. How can Temporary Joy and Apprehensions of Eternal Judgment consist together! And does not the Wise Man imply by this severe *Irony* that they cannot.

THE Capacity of Man is too narrow to yield a full Attention to two contrary Sentiments, especially if one be so very much stronger than the other; and we find that actual Pain does always lessen, and
it

the Fear of Death. 39

if very great, wholly swallow up and drown the Sense of actual Pleasure. For what would the sweetest Strains in Musick signify to a Man in the Extremity of the Stone or Gout? But now the very Apprehension of an Evil, if very Extraordinary, though *Future*, will fill and ingage the Capacity as much, and sometimes more than the present actual Sense of one that is lesser. And we may guess by our Saviour's Agony in the Garden, at what rate to measure the *Expectation* of an Evil, and how many degrees of *actual* Suffering it may be set against. How then must the Fears of Death and Judgment, and the Wrath of God, not for a few Hours only (as in our Saviour's Case) but for a whole

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whole Eternity fill, employ, divide and distract the Capacity of him that is under them, and consequently not only alloy and disgust, but even deaden and make utterly insipid whatever would otherwise be savoury and relishing in his Life, and diffuse a general Bitterness through all the Enjoyments of it !

FURTHER, So vast is the disproportion between Temporal and Eternal, that the bare Contemplation of Eternity, tho' without any relation to Happiness or Misery, as indifferently considered, with respect only to its infinite *Duration*, will bring to Nothing and utterly Annihilate all the Thoughts, and all the Accounts of Time, and make a
Man,

the Fear of Death. 41

Man, while he has that immense Idea before him, overlook all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of ten thousand Ages. And how then may we suppose will the Thoughts and Fears of a *Miserable* Eternity damp all the Pleasure, and imbitter all the Comfort of a Man's whole Life ! I say the Thoughts and Fears of a miserable Eternity, which will lie down with him when he goes to Bed, awake with him when he opens his Eyes, (if we can suppose a Man with those Fears at all to have shut them) rise with him when he gets up, be his constant Companions all the Day, and haunt him wherever he is, even in his last Refuge the *Tavern*, whatever he is about, and with whomsoever he converses. And how, do we imagine,

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gine, shall a Man that has such a black Cloud upon his Mind, that carries such a constant Hell about him, enjoy Life, I had almost said *Endure* it, and not chuse Strangling rather than Life, than such a Life, in the midst of which he may truly say that he is in Death. But if he should make a shift to endure it, yet what a Miserable Slavish Life must such a one lead, under what Bondage must he groan, and how Passionately methinks do I hear him cry, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Terrors of this Death!* Which leads me to Consider,

THIRDLY, and Lastly, *The Remedy both of this Fear and of this Slavery.* The Fear
of

the Fear of Death. 43

of Death, to resume our former Distinction, is either *Natural* or *Rational*. Against the First of these he must be a bold Empiric that shall undertake to prescribe a Remedy. God has not provided any against the natural Fear Death, nor is the thing it self capable of any, and there is great Reason to think that even the Son of God himself was not exempt from it, much less then will he exempt us. But there is a Remedy provided against the Rational Fear of Death. Now this I shall consider,

1. As it is already wrought and effected by Christ, who is here said in the Text to *deliver them who thro' Fear of Death*

42 *A Remedy against*

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I. As it is already wrought and effected by Christ, who is here said in the Text to *deliver them who thro' Fear of Death*

44 *A Remedy against*

*Death were all their Life-time
subject to Bondage.*

2. As it is to be further wrought and completed by every Man for himself.

FIRST, *We have a Remedy against the Fear of Death provided for us already by Christ.* This the Apostle plainly intimates where having said, *that the Sting of Death is Sin*, he immediately adds, *But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor. 15. 57.

The Victory, but over what? Why over Sin immediately, and by that over Death. *For the Sting of Death is Sin.* In the same Measure and Proportion therefore that Christ has deliver'd us from Sin, in the
very

the Fear of Death. 45

very same he has also deliver'd us from Death, and from the Fear of Death. But now he has deliver'd us from Sin, both as to the Power of it, and as to the Guilt. From the Power of Sin by his Grace, and from the Guilt of Sin by his Blood. But from neither actually and immediately, but only in Power and Possibility. For when I say that Christ by his Blood has deliver'd us from the Guilt of Sin, I would not be so understood as if actual Pardon or Justification were the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, for then no Man need fear *dying*, or take any Care how he *lived*, but only that Christ has made Sin actually Pardonable, and has put all Men into a Capacity of being discharg'd from the Guilt of it.

And

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And so when I say that Christ by his Grace has deliver'd us from the Power of Sin, I do not mean, neither ought I, that all Men are immediately, and *ipso Facto*, Sanctify'd and made Holy by the Redeeming Grace of Christ, but only that they have a Power and a Capacity given them of becoming so. This therefore being the Measure of our Deliverance from Sin, we must conclude that the same is the Measure of our Deliverance from Death, and that Christ has so far deliver'd us from all reasonable Fear of it, as he has put us into a Capacity of avoiding those sad Consequences of it, for whose sake alone it is justly to be fear'd. And truly they are unworthy of the Redemption of Christ who do
not

the Fear of Death. 47

not think this a sufficient Deliverance on his Part, and who will not be so grateful as to acknowledge it in those Words of the Apostle, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.* But then this being thus far only a Capacity, which thro' default on our side may never be brought into act, will oblige us to look further, and to consider this Remedy.

SECONDLY, *As it is to be farther wrought and compleated by our selves.* Here we strike into a large and beaten Road, and may meet with as many Remedies against the Fear of Death as there are Prescriptions for the Cure of an Ague. Every one has his Receipt and his Direction, and a certain
Writer,

48 *A Remedy against*

Monſieur
Drelin court.

Writer, of no ordinary Fame, has, to make ſure Work of it, mix'd the Ingredients, and put them all into one Composition. But for my part I know but of one that is Effectual, and that will ſtand the Teſt either of a Sick Bed, or of a Sound Mind, and that is a good Life, a clear Conſcience, an honeſt Heart, and a well-order'd Converſation, to carry the Thoughts of Dying Men about us, and ſo to live before we Dye, as we ſhall wiſh we had when we come to it. This is a ſure Remedy, and that will certainly do the Work, deliver us both from the Fear of Death, and from the Slavery and Bondage that attends that Fear. As for other Remedies there's no depending

the Fear of Death. 49

pending upon them, for if they should happen to take away our Fear, yet they do not take away the *Ground* of it, and so prevail not by their own Strength, but by the Weakness of those Minds upon whom they Succeed. But a good Life, like a proper and true *Specific*, strikes at the Cause and Bottom of the Distemper, and removes not only the Fear it self, but the Ground and Reason of it. It disarms Death of its Sting, whereas other Remedies do at the most but stupify our *Sense* that we may not feel it. For after all the Arts that shall be used, and all the fine Consolations that shall be address'd against the Fear of Death, it cannot be denied but that Death is truly in it
C self

50 *A Remedy against*

self a terrible and dreadful thing to him whom it finds in an ill State and Course of Life, and that 'tis nothing but a Good and Regular one that can make it otherwise. If therefore you would not Fear Death, you must keep a due distance from Sin, which is the Sting of it, and if you would Die with Comfort you must Live with Care.

AND how infinitely does it concern us all to do so! Every Man knows that he must Infallibly Die one time or other, and when that time comes, he knows withal how different his Sentiments and Apprehensions of things will then be from what they are now, and particularly with what Strength and Vigour of Application he shall then wish he had led his
Life

the Fear of Death. 51

Life well, and made good use of his Time. Which if he has not, he must needs know withal what dreadful Agonies and Convulsions of Mind he must then be in, and with what dread and horror he shall enter upon Eternity. And therefore if 'twere only to avoid this last terrible Plunge, this most frightful and uncomfortable *Exit*, it would be of the most important Concernment to every Man to Live well, so well that he may Die without any other Agonies than those that are Natural, and may at least have *Hope* in his Death.

BUT are we concern'd only for this last Scene of our Life? Is it of no Consequence to us to pass the whole Course of it with Comfort and Satisfaction?

52 *A Remedy against*

faction? Is it not the Interest and Concern of every Man to enjoy his Life with Pleasure, as well as to leave it at last without Horror? Is not every Man concern'd to provide that neither the Desire of Life may imbitter his Death, nor the Fear of Death discomfort his Life? Is not Enjoyment of Life the very Life of it? Yes, no doubt it is, and 'tis what all Men desire, and in their several ways endeavour after. But then why don't they take more care to live as they ought, since that only can make them as Happy as they desire? And indeed, considering how certain and unavoidable Death is, how Natural and Necessary it is in some Measure to fear it, and how hard a thing it is to conquer

the Fear of Death. 53

conquer even the *Rational* Fear of it, and what a melancholy Aspect and Disconsolate Influence this Fear has upon the whole Course of a Man's Life, how it damps its Pleasures, and overcasts all its Light and Glory, and that a good Life is the only sure Antidote against this Fear, with which no tolerable Enjoyment of Life can consist; I say, considering these Things, one would think that every reflecting Man at least, if 'twere only to enjoy Life while he has it, should apply himself to the serious Study and Practice of Religion, and never content himself till by living better and better, and rising higher and higher, he has at length attain'd to such a degree of Christian Piety, as will set
C 3 him

54 *A Remedy against*

him above the Fear of Death. For the short is this, as long as Men fear Death, they will have no tolerable Enjoyment of Life, and as long as they lead ill Lives they will be under a necessity of fearing Death, and therefore as long as they lead ill Lives they will lead very unhappy and uneasy Lives, will enjoy neither themselves nor their Friends, neither Solitude nor Company, neither Business nor Diversion, will be too much concern'd for the Future to be able to relish the Present; in one Word, will *through Fear of Death be all their Lifetime subject to Bondage*. Which, if it cannot be avoided, is the Life of a *Slave* only, but if it can, 'tis the Life of a *Fool*.

Now to God the Father, &c.

F I N I S.

55

THE
Successive VANITY
OF
Human Life.

ECCL. II. 8.

— *All that cometh is
Vanity.*

By JOHN NORRIS, M. A.
late Rector of Bemerton
near Sarum

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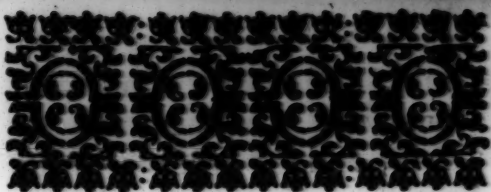
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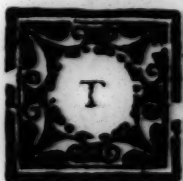




THE
Successive Vanity
OF
HUMAN LIFE.

Eccl. XI. 8.

—*All that cometh is Vanity.*



HIS is one of those *Melancholy* but *Wholesome* Considerations where- with the Wise Preacher qualifies and allays the Joy and Festivity of a long and Prosperous Life; the Pride and Luxuriancy of which he Tempers with a
C 5 double

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double Reflection ; One taken from the Consideration of *Death*, and the other from the *Successive Vanity* of Human Life. But if a Man live many Years (says he) and rejoyce in them all, yet let him remember the Days of Darkness, for they shall be many. As much as to say, 'tis not very likely that a Man should live many Years, considering the Niceness and Delicacy of his Bodily Frame, the Variety of Diseases and other Accidents he is Subject to, and the very small Number of those that attain to any considerable Age, in Comparison of those Multitudes who drop away before they come to any Ripeness, like untimely Fruit, whom either some inward Decay, or the Force of Violent Winds loosens or snatches

snatches from the Tree. But suppose a Man by the strength of his Seminal Principles and a right Conjunction of other Accidents should live many Years, yet 'tis not at all likely he should rejoice in them all, 'tis not indeed likely that a very Long Life should be also a very Happy one, at least that it should be Happy throughout, in every Stage and Period of it. We usually say indeed a Short Life and a Merry, and Fair Weather may last for a little Season, but 'tis not probable that so long a Day should be without a Cloud to over-cast its Light, or a Storm to ruffle its Stillness, but should Shine on Clear and Calm to the very last. For besides that Human Life is liable to variety of Casual

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ties, and there are innumerable ways whereby a Man may be Cross'd, even when he seems most secure of what he fancies would make him Happy, the Scenes of the World Change so fast, and the Foul Days in his Kalendar have such quick returns, that in all probability a Man cannot live very long without meeting with some of them. 'Tis much, if in a great while he does not Feel or see some sad Event or other, 'tis much if he does not Suffer either in his own Person, or else in his Friends and Relations, unless he live so tediously long as to have none, but to be Friendless and Desolate in a wide and ill-natur'd World, and by that time I think his *Days of Rejoicing* will be pretty well over, and that he may be
weary

weary of the World, if the World be not of him.

By this it seems highly improbable that a Man should live many Years and Rejoyce in them all. But suppose he should, suppose the Current of his long Life should run Clear and Fine to the last, and that by a rare and indulgent Providence he should pass over his flow Stage smoothly and pleasantly, without meeting with the least Rub in his way, any thing that may interrupt the Course of his Prosperity, or diminish his Sense of it. Suppose in a Word that God should empty his *Left* hand upon him, Bless him with all Worldly Happiness, and with Days too wherein to enjoy the sweet of it, yet let

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let him remember the *Days of Darknes*s. Let him remember that all this Happiness, as Great and as long-lived as it is, must come to an End, that this Fair Sun must Set, and this long Day be follow'd with a much longer Night, that Death shall put an End to all, and that then his Confinement to Darknes shall outlast his Enjoyment of the Light, and he shall lie longer under the Ground, than he has lived and walk'd upon it. Let him remember the Days of Darknes, for they shall be many.

BUT then for fear he should *Forget* them, because he looks upon them as a great way off, the Wise Man presents him in the mean while with something of a nearer Consideration,

of Human Life. 63

on, and more present Concernment, and that is, that constant *Succession* of *Vanity* which is in Human Life, that all that is to come of it shall be no more to his Satisfaction than what he hath seen and enjoy'd of it already, and that his Future Expectations shall prove every whit as vain and uncontenting as his past Fruitions; and that therefore as a long Life is not Ordinarily to be hoped for, so even by those that have it, 'tis not much to be valued or reckon'd upon, but that something more Lasting and Satisfying is to be sought after: For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

T H E R E are some Truths which Men want to have *Prov'd* and *Explain'd* to them
in

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in a *Rational* way, because they are wholly Ignorant of them, or at least do not clearly and fully understand them. And there are others again which they do understand well enough whenever they are pleas'd to Consider and Reflect upon them ; but the Fault and the Unhappiness is, that they seldom or never do so, and accordingly live and order themselves as if they were ignorant of them. Now these Truths need not so much to be *Demonstrated* as *Illustrated*, and set in a Fair and Advantageous Light, where they may meet and strike the Drowsy and Unattentive Eye, which needs no other assistance towards the Sight of such Objects, than only to be directed to them. Of this latter Order

of Human Life. 65

der of Truths I take that of the Text under Consideration to be, and accordingly I intend,

FIRST, To give it some Illustration; and then,

SECONDLY, To make some Practical Improvement of it to the most Material Uses of Life.

ALL that cometh is Vanity, says the inspired Preacher, wherein he directly meets with that gross Cheat and Illusion which Men suffer to pass upon themselves, and which a great many never discover all their Lives long. They will readily own that all that is *past* is Vanity, if 'twere only because it is *past*. They have found it

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it so, and are convinc'd of it by a thousand Experiments made. They have even by as many as they have found that the World, like the Prince of it, the Devil, has been a Liar from the beginning, has always deceiv'd them, and that they never enjoy'd, but were disappointed. And accordingly, there is not a Man of them that would live over his past Years again. And as free will they be to allow you that the *present* is also Vanity. They actually feel it so, are uneasy under it, and for that Reason wish the *present* were *past*. And because it does not pass fast enough, they contrive Arts and Devices to *pass* it away. They not only find that whosoever drinks of these Waters shall thirst again, (as our Saviour's Expression

B u T what if I should become *Wise* and *Knowing*? Why then I should be less pleas'd than ever, both with my self and with the World about me. I should then be less able to bear the Follies and Impertinences of Conversation, which would strike more disagreeably upon my more delicate Sense, as harsh Sounds do upon a nice and well-tuned Ear; that which pleases me now would not relish with me then, nay, I know not what would, for I should so see thro' the Vanity of every thing, as to take Pleasure in nothing. For when all's done, the Pleasure of this Life is founded upon *Ignorance*, and the Wise Man can find no Paradise here, tho' the Fool can. 'Tis in this re

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spect also as well as in regard of its Transientness, like the Pleasure of a *Dream*, because owing to *Sleep*. And it lasts as long as those Phantastick Pleasures use to do; that is, till a Man is *awake*, till he recovers the use of his Senses, till his Eyes are open, till he comes to himself, (as 'tis said of the young Prodigal, *Luke 15.*) till he begins to think, reflect and consider, and then it vanishes like a Dream when one is *awake*, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 73.* So that a Man's Wisdom would but awake him from a Golden Dream, rob him of a kind and obliging Error, discover to him his Poverty as well as his Ignorance, and make him see the Falleness of that Coin by its Light, which pass'd well enough

of Human Life. 81

nough with him in the Dark. So true would he find that of the Wise as well as Great King, *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increases Knowledge increases Sorrow.* Our Supposition was here made good, Solomon had Wisdom as well as Wealth and Honour, and he found that as vain as the other two; his Wisdom that discover'd the Vanity of other things, at length discover'd that of it self, even the *Light* it self prov'd to be but a *Shadow*, and so 'tis in every thing else: For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

A N D there is clear and evident Reason for all this. For God having made us for the Enjoyment of himself, has accordingly proportion'd our Capacities to the immense Good

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of his own Nature; and tho' he has limited every other Sense and Faculty about us, yet he has set no Bounds to our *Desires*, but has given a kind of *Infinity* to our *Wills*, wherein by the way consists the principal part of the Divine Image and Resemblance in us. And therefore 'tis absolutely impossible we should be satisfied with any thing here, let us enjoy what we will, because we shall still desire beyond what we enjoy. 'Tis true indeed upon the same Grounds a Man may be here very *miserable*, because that strong Spring whereby he stands bent for Happiness will make him the more sensible of those Pains and Grievs which are contrary to it; but 'tis impossible that any thing in this World should make him very *happy*. BUT

BUT what then is Life worth at this Rate? Why truly not much, unless it be in order to a better State hereafter, and as 'tis an Opportunity for it. Nor do I know any great Reason a Man has to desire to live *longer*, unless it be that he may live *better*. But then does not this reflect upon the Goodness of God, that he would place so noble a Creature in such poor Circumstances, in a *barren and dry Land, where no Water is*, to quench that fiery Thirst which he has put in his Nature? No, as Man cannot be very happy here, so neither is it fit he should. For however it might have been with *Adam* if he had continu'd innocent, who perhaps might have had such
free

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free and large Communications from God, as would have made a true Paradise of a Garden, and turn'd his Terrestrial State into a kind of Heaven ; yet 'tis to be consider'd that we are now Sinners, and as such excluded from having any *Paradise* upon Earth by the same Sentence that cast *Adam* out of his. We are now in a State of *Penance*, as well as in a State of *Tryal* and *Probation*, and therefore must not anticipate our Reward here, but be exercis'd with Vanity and Dissatisfaction, which is that *fore Travail* that God has laid upon the Sons of *Adam*, who tho' Heirs of Glory, and born to Crowns and Scepters in the other World, must yet inherit only Dreams, Shadows, and Vanity in this, wherein
all

all that cometh is Vanity. There is no Content to be found in any of the Enjoyments of this World, let a Man's Share of it, or state in it be what it will, 'tis all but a Union of Cyphers, a Collection of Nothing, not worth a Thought, or a Wish, or a Tear ; only in Religion and the conscientious Discharge of one's Duty, and the practice of a good Life, (the only place where Men seek not for it) there is some real Content and true Satisfaction to be had, and the more we improve in Goodness, the more happy and comfortable will our Lives be. According to the Observation of the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. I see that all things come to an end, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Wherein he is not contradicted,

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ed, but seconded by his Son *Solomon*, who though he inscribed Vanity upon all things else, even upon *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, yet (which is not a little observable) found none in *Religion* and the *Fear* of God ; but on the contrary, recommends these as the final result of all his Reflections upon the Vanity of things, and as the whole of Man, *Eccl.* 11. 13.

AND yet after all, 'tis not all the Reasoning in the World that will effectually convince Men of its Vanity, 'till the *Holy Spirit* of God shall work this Conviction in their Hearts by an inward *Sentiment* exceeding the force of all *Rational Light*. Convinc'd indeed they may be after a sort, they see it by Reason, and find it by Expe-

Experience. But they are not so convinc'd as to give over expecting and projecting, building Castles in the Air, and making up Fools Paradises to themselves ; not so convinc'd of the Vanity of Life as to lay down their fond Dependencies upon what is to come of it, but in the midst of all their Reflections and Experiencies, follow on as keenly upon the World, as if they were ignorant of its Vanity, and never had made Tryal of its Deceits. 'Tis plain therefore that this is only a general and notional Conviction of the World's Vanity, such as swims in the Brain, and floats in the Fancy, such as musing and thoughtful Men form to themselves in a Study, but presently lose and forget again

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again as soon as they come abroad into this bewitching World. But now the *Holy Spirit* gives another sort of Conviction of the World's Vanity, such as is deep, lively, actual, and abiding, such as sinks down into the bottom of our Spirits, and from thence as an inner spring actuates and inforces all our outward Motions, such in one word as *Dying Men* have—. But I hasten to the Improvement that may be made of these Considerations to the use of Living. Briefly then,

I. IF there be such an universal Vanity diffused thro' the whole compass of Human Life, so that what comes on will be as little to our Satisfaction as what is gone and
past,

past, then this lays a considerable ground to confirm us in the belief and expectation of a *Future State*, it being not worth while for God to bring such noble Creatures into such a vain as well as transitory World, if it were not in order to somewhat further. If God had not intended us for any other State than this, to take a turn or two here, and then sink into our first nothing, he either would not have made us, or else he would have suited our Capacities to the narrow Measure of these Wordly Objects: And therefore since we find our selves so much above them as not possibly to be satisfied with them, may we not hence conclude that this Life is not our final or only State, but that there is another

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another, and a better Life to come.

AGAIN, 2. If this present World and Life be so all over Vanity, then we may hence learn the great Folly and Madnefs of Sin. 'Tis certain that no Man fins purely for Sin's fake. 'Tis the Confideration of some Pleasure or Advantage or other that induces him to it. *What will ye give me,* said Judas to the Chief Priests, *and I will deliver him unto you.* And the same is the Language of every Sinner to those three cursed Traders for Souls, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, *What will ye give me?* Why, *All this will I give thee,* says the last of them, shewing him some of the vain Grandeurs or Pleasures

Expression is) but they feel themselves dry, even while they are drinking; nay, that their very drinking increases their Thirst. They feel an Emptiness and an Hollowness after they have feasted upon the World, and find they have suck'd nothing but Wind from the *Breasts of her Consolation*. They abound, they overflow, nay, they surfeit with excess, and yet they are not pleased, there is something wanting; they *possess* enough, but they *enjoy* little, and their Souls are empty while their Arms are full. So fatal and unavoidable is the Unhappiness of Man, whether he has the things of this World, or has them not. If he has them not, then he pines and languishes for want of them, and frets

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frets with Envy against those that have them. And if he has them, yet the matter is not mended, for then he is troubled at their Vanity, and sighs to see himself so baulk'd and disappointed in them.

THEY will therefore easily be brought to confess that the *past* and *present* are all over Vanity. All the Question is concerning what is to *come*. And tho', since the past and present were once future, they have all the reason in the World to suspect the same of that part of Life which remains; *viz.* That when it comes to be present it will be as vain as those other Futures were when present or past, yet (so strange and unaccountable is their stupidity) 'tis most certain that they

they do not. No, on the contrary, tho' they need but consult their Memory for the Vanity of their past Life, and their present Sense for the Vanity of what they now enjoy, tho' their Life has been all along till now, and is now nothing but Disappointment, yet (such is the Magick that has enchanted them) they cannot forbear fancying that they shall find greater Contentment in that which is *behind*, that their happy Days are yet to come, that they shall one time or other be better pleased and satisfied with their Condition, and that that Happiness which has hitherto been too slippery for their hold, and like a Shadow or a Vapour, has slipped thro' their grasping Arms, shall one Day be confin'd within

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in the Circle of their Embraces. Hence they pass on to *Fictions* and *Suppositions*, projecting Models of Happiness to themselves, and imagining how well 'twould be with them, and how finely they should enjoy themselves, if they were but in such and such Circumstances. Thus they fancy, or rather thus they *Dream*, and in the strength of this weak Imagination, they begin every Day with a fresh Expectation, enter upon new Charges and Labours, as the flattering credulous *Chymist* does in the Search of his *Elixir*, and put forward with a trembling Passion in the Chase of Happiness, which some of them pursue so eagerly, and are for overtaking so very soon, that they quicken their Pace, and are for
living

living fast as they call it, tho' they overtake nothing by it in the Event but an early Grave, and in a very literal Sense run themselves *out of Breath*.

THIS is the Sentiment and the Conduct of Men, thus they think, and thus they act, or rather thus they dream, and thus they walk in their Sleep. But if they will hear a Man of more Wisdom and Experience than themselves, he will tell them that *all that cometh is Vanity*. 'Tis so, and they will find it so, one part of Life after another, as fast as it cometh. For indeed as long as it is *coming*, or *to come*, its Vanity does not appear; on the contrary there is nothing thought of then but Content and Satisfaction, nothing but
Elysian

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Elysian Prospects, Dreams of Happiness, and Landskips of Paradise. For there is a strange Fallacy in *hereafter*, and Distance which lessens Objects to the Eye, magnifies them to the Mind. We are big with the Hopes of that part of Life which is coming on, and live Day after Day upon the Fancy of what to-morrow will produce, like the Spectators of a Play, still in Expectation of the next Scene, but yet when to-morrow comes we find it just like yesterday, Vain and without Content, and so will every to-morrow be when it comes to be to *Day*.

BUT yet this enchanted Sleep hangs still in our Eyes, and we will dream on, and
when

when we have set the Day for such an Enjoyment, we long with as much Impatience for the happy Season as the *Adulterous Eye* does for the flow Twilight, complain of the heavy Progress of Time, and are contriving how to pass the dull *Interim* away that delays our Pleasure, and enviously stands between us and our promised Entertainment. But yet when the long-look'd-for Happiness arrives, we find it quite another thing in the Enjoyment than it was in the *Idea*, that it will not bear the Weight we lay upon it, that it neither answers our Expectations, nor satisfies our Desires. We find in short that there is nothing in it, and so we are serv'd from day to day, and so shall be as long

D

as

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as long as we live, even all
the Days of our Vanity.

'T I S in the Course of Life,
as when a Man walks or rides
in a *Fog*. In the very place
where he moves, the thin sub-
tile Vapour seems as nothing,
and is hardly visible, but at
some distance from him, it
appears of so thick and massy
a consistence, that he fancies
it would sensibly resist his
Touch, and that he could
embrace it in his Arms. But
yet when he arrives to the de-
sign'd place, he finds himself
in the thin again, and the
Phantastick Solid is remov'd
from him to a further Di-
stance. Just so the Happiness
of this Life is always to come,
still at some remove from us,
never *actual* and *present*. For
whenever

whenever it is so, it vanishes into a thin nothing, and is lost as soon as found. We think we *shall* be happy, but we never think we *are* so; and most certain it is we shall never be here of that Opinion; for *all that cometh is Vanity*. So that in this Sense also as well as in that intended by St. James, what is our Life but a *Vapour*?
James 4. 14.

MEN commonly think of no other Disappointment but but only the not having what they desire, and this in their Language is called not to *succeed*; but if they do indeed thus succeed and accomplish their Wish, they will find another, and if I mistake not, a worse Disappointment, the not *enjoying what they have*,

D 2

the

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the Disappointment of *Fruition*. I call it a worse Disappointment, for this as well as some other Reasons that might be assign'd, because 'tis so necessary, perpetual and unavoidable. The first sort of Disappointment may be often prevented by wise Management. 'Tis not necessary a Man should always lose his Longing, and miss of what he desires. No, he may sometimes compass his Point, and obtain the thing that he wills. But no Management or Address, no Skill or Contrivance can prevent the second; no, nor any *Success* neither; for 'tis with the Success that this Disappointment begins. For no sooner is any thing enjoy'd, no sooner does any of our Reversions of Happiness fall, but

but 'tis weigh'd in the Balance and found wanting ; *All that cometh is Vanity.*

T H U S it has been from the beginning, and thus it will be to the end of Life, every part of which is a Cheat, a Delusion, a Lie, and every Man that lives walks in a *vain Shadow*, in the Fog we were but now speaking of, till his Walk is at an end, and the weary Traveller reposes himself in the Grave. He that is young thinks it a wonderful Happiness to live a great while, but when he has obtain'd his Wish does he find that Satisfaction in it ? And so he that is *poor* and *low* in the World fancies it a kind of Heaven to be rich and great ; but when he is so does he find

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it such a happy State as he before imagin'd? Could I then lengthen out my Span to an *Antediluvian* stretch, what should I be the better, or what great matter should I find in it! 'Twould be a mere nothing, not only when past, but even while present. Besides more *Sins* and more *Disappointments*, I should only repeat the same things over a little oftner, and make more frequent *Turnings* in the same *Circle*. And so for Wealth or Preferment, could I be rich or great I should not find that Light and Lustre in it which now at a distance flashes and sparkles in my Eye, but should quickly grow sick of that State my self which perhaps another would still envy in me.

BUT

of Human Life. 9

Pleasures of this Transitory Life. He has the unhappy Advantage to come with ready Money in his Hand (such Stuff as it is) for which the needy and covetous Sinner likes his Chapman, and accordingly deals with him. So that in all Sin there is at least an implicit, if not an express Contract, and every Sinner plainly makes a Bargain, selling his *Soul* as really and truly (tho' not always at the same Price) as *Judas* did the Body of our Saviour. But alas! what a mad foolish Bargain is it! For what is it that he has in Exchange? Could the Devil make good his confident Offer in the largest Extent, when he says, *All this will I give thee*, yet what is that mighty *All*? What is there
in

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in this vain World, tho' a Man could be Master of the whole of it (according to our Saviour's Supposition) that should induce him to do the least Evil, to offend an Infinite God, and hazard a Happy, not to say Miserable Eternity? *What Fruit*, says the Apostle, *had ye then in those things*, Rom. 6. 21. What Fruit indeed, but the Fruits of Sodom, deceitful Viands, airy Banquets, phantastick Food, that is so far from satisfying the Hunger, that it will not so much as indure the Touch. And shall I sell my Soul, my God, my Heaven for this? So that one may well put that Question of the Psalmist, *Are not they without Understanding that work Wickedness?* That do such Work
for

for such Wages? They call themselves indeed Rational Creatures, and some of them pretend more particularly to *Reason*, and set up for *Wits*, but have they so much as common Sense or Understanding? Or rather may not every Sinner more justly say to the God he has offended in the Words of an humble Penitent, *So foolish was I and ignorant, and even as a Beast before thee.*

AGAIN, 3. If all that cometh be Vanity as well as all that's past, then we have the less reason to fear Death, particularly ~~that~~ which we call an *untimely* one, and none at all to reckon upon the Pleasures of a long Life. The less reason to fear Death, because the World it takes us from is
so

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so very vain and little worth. And none to reckon upon the Pleasures of a long Life, because these Pleasures are only in the Imagination, such as those who die early think they lose, but those who live longer do not find. For we do not advance in Happiness as we do in Years, especially if we grow wiser with our Age, but tread the same Fairy-ring, and find nothing more in our latter than in our former Rounds, except only greater Toil and Weariness. Tho' therefore a Man should live many Years, yet let him remember not only the Days of *Darkness*, but the Days of *Light* too : For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

AGAIN,

A G A I N, 4. and Lastly,
From the Consideration of
that constantly successive Vani-
ty, which as a Shadow, always
attends and keeps pace with
this present Life, we may be
further instructed to make the
more careful Provision for ano-
ther, to seek out for something
more lasting and satisfying, a
*better and a more induring Sub-
stance, even that Inheritance
which is incorruptible and unde-
filed, and that fadeth not away,
reserved in Heaven for us.* Con-
sidering what a sad thing it
would be, first to walk all
our Lives in a vain Shadow,
and then to lie down in Sor-
row, to have *Vanity* for our
Portion here, and eternal *Mi-
sery* hereafter. The former
we

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we cannot avoid, but we may the latter ; and that we may all have the Wisdom to do so, God of his infinite Mercy grant through Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all Glory and Thanksgiving for ever. *Amen.*

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